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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God of time and eternity, we praise and honor Your Name. You give strength and hope to the weary. You are more than we can comprehend, yet You dwell with those who have contrite spirits.

Bless the Members of this body. Keep them steadfast and always excelling in the things that glorify You. Remind them that those who serve You will not labor in vain.

Although we do not know what this day will bring, we trust You to use us as instruments of Your will. Consecrate our actions with the power of Your love.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM DEMINT led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 4, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. DEMINT thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning, at 10 a.m., we will proceed to a vote on the confirmation of Michael Chagares to be a U.S. circuit judge for the Third Circuit.

Following that vote, we will resume debate on the border security bill. We have four first-degree amendments pending to the bill at this time, and we expect to begin votes on those amendments today. The chairman is ready to dispose of those amendments so that we can consider additional amendments to the bill. This is the final week before the Easter break. However, I believe it is ample time to consider this bill, if we get everybody's cooperation and participation. If we can consider amendments under reasonable time agreements, then we can make substantial progress each day and evening in order to finish our work on the bill. Having said that, we will have votes each day this week, with late-night sessions possible as we move forward on the bill.

TENNESSEE STORMS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Sunday evening, severe storms and tornadoes struck the western part of Tennessee, leaving a damage trail 25 miles long and a quarter to a half mile wide throughout Dyer County. It really

struck two counties, Dyer and Gibson. The assessment is underway. About 2,000 homes and businesses have been destroyed or suffered substantial damage, a devastating blow to these small rural communities which have suffered the greatest impact from the storm. There have been reported 23 fatalities that have been confirmed as a result of the tragedy. A number of other Tennesseans—right now, the count is roughly 82—have been injured, 17 critically. This morning, I offer my deepest sympathy to the loved ones, the families that have been affected. My thoughts go out to those recovering from these unforeseen events.

Governor Bredeisen has requested a major disaster declaration for the State, and yesterday I asked the President for expeditious review and approval of Tennessee's request for assistance. I spoke yesterday with the Acting Director of FEMA, David Paulison, as well to express my strong support for the State's request. I will continue working with the administration and my colleagues in the Tennessee delegation to ensure State and local officials have the resources they need to assist our communities.

Again, our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the families affected.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I wish to comment on the immigration reform debate. Our borders are dangerously porous, and our immigration system is flatout broken. That is why it is so important for us to debate and focus on the issue of immigration reform and to bring that debate to closure over the course of this week. It is my hope that by Friday we will have a bill that is fair and equitable, that gives priority to our security concerns and at the same time respects America's strong and proud immigrant tradition. We are a nation of the rule of law and a strong nation of immigrant heritage.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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